



**ACTION  
AGAINST  
HUNGER**



**supporttolife**



**STRENGTHENING  
COMMUNITIES:  
SOCIOECONOMIC RECOVERY  
IN POST-EARTHQUAKE TÜRKİYE  
TÜRKİYE, JULY 2024**



## LEGAL INFORMATION

**Authored by:**

Action Against Hunger Spain and Support to Life. July, 2024

Reproduction is permitted providing the source is credited, unless otherwise specified. If reproduction or use of textual and multimedia data (sound, images, software, etc.) is submitted for prior authorization, such authorization will cancel the general authorization described above and will clearly indicate any restriction on use.



# ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

<b>ACF</b>	Action Against Hunger
<b>AFAD</b>	Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency
<b>ASGEM</b>	Adıyaman Chamber of Commerce and Industry Vocational Training Center
<b>BDOs</b>	Business Development Organizations
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organization
<b>DOĞAKA</b>	Eastern Mediterranean Development Agency
<b>ERRP</b>	Earthquake Recovery and Resilience Plan
<b>ESMAT</b>	Earthquake Sector Monitoring and Analysis Team
<b>GBV</b>	Gender-Based Violence
<b>ICAP</b>	Integrated Cash Assistance Platform
<b>IDP</b>	Internally Displaced People
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization
<b>INGO</b>	International Non-Governmental Organization
<b>IOM</b>	International Organization for Migration
<b>İŞKUR</b>	Provincial Directorates of Public Employment Agency
<b>KOSGEB</b>	Small and Medium Industry Development Organization
<b>MBFS</b>	Mother Baby Friendly Space
<b>MHPSS</b>	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
<b>MSMEs</b>	Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>SES</b>	Socioeconomic Empowerment and Sustainability
<b>SMEs</b>	Small and Medium Enterprises
<b>SRP</b>	Solidarity Respect & Protect
<b>STL</b>	Support to Life
<b>TKDK</b>	Turkish Rural Development Support Institution
<b>TOBB</b>	The Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey
<b>TRC</b>	Turkish Red Crescent
<b>TURKSTAT</b>	Turkish Statistical Institute
<b>TYP</b>	Community Support Programs
<b>UKAID</b>	United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID)
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>UNOCHA</b>	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
<b>WASH</b>	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene
<b>WFP</b>	World Food Programme



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>LEGAL INFORMATION</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>BACKGROUND</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>FINDINGS</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>1. THEMATIC ANALYSIS</b>	<b>8</b>
1) Reconstruction and economic recovery	9
2) Migration dynamics and impact	10
3) Motivation	11
4) Decent work and living conditions	12
5) Collaborations	13
<b>2. GEOGRAPHICAL ANALYSIS</b>	<b>14</b>
1) Adana	15
2) Adiyaman	17
3) Hatay	20
4) Kahramanmaraş	23
5) Malatya	26
6) Mersin	28
<b>3. RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>31</b>
1) Local economy revitalization	32
2) Capacity building	33
3) Understanding target groups circumstances	34
4) Localization and partnership	35



## INTRODUCTION

This study, conducted in collaboration between Action Against Hunger and Support to Life, aims to contribute to the socioeconomic recovery efforts of the actors engaged in the region. The goals of this document are to assess the impact of the February 2023 earthquakes on both the host and refugee populations in Türkiye, identify key areas for intervention, and provide recommendations for fostering inclusive recovery.

This document distinguishes itself through the inclusive involvement of a diverse range of stakeholders and its incorporation of qualitative

information to complement the existing quantitative data. This approach ensures a holistic understanding of the situation, capturing nuanced perspectives and experiences that quantitative data alone cannot convey.

By providing a comprehensive assessment of the current socioeconomic conditions, this document aims to inform humanitarian organizations, local actors, and other stakeholders in their efforts to contribute to the economic recovery of the areas affected by the 2023 earthquakes and support affected populations.

## BACKGROUND

On February 6, 2023, two powerful earthquakes, the largest in the region for centuries with magnitudes of 7.8 and 7.5, struck Türkiye and Syria, followed by numerous significant aftershocks. According to the Turkish Ministry of Interior, the earthquakes in Türkiye resulted in the deaths of 53,537 people and injuries to 107,213 individuals<sup>1</sup>. The earthquakes caused widespread destruction to buildings and infrastructure in both urban and rural areas, with 650,000 independent units either demolished or in urgent need of demolition, 170,000 units moderately damaged, and 1.4 million units slightly damaged.

The total economic cost of the disaster was estimated at approximately \$104 billion. The most significant portion of the damage was to housing, which accounted for about \$57 billion, with over a million survivors rendered homeless. Other substantial damages included \$13 billion to public infrastructure and service buildings, and \$12 billion to the private sector excluding housing<sup>2</sup>.

The earthquakes exacerbated an already complex situation in the region, destabilized by years of conflict, economic crises, and significant refugee movements. Türkiye hosts the largest number of refugees worldwide. In recent years, the country has granted temporary protection status to approximately 3.6 million Syrian refugees and around 320,000 refugees from Afghanistan, Iraq, and other non-European countries.

In Türkiye, the provinces most affected by the February 2023 earthquakes included Adıyaman, Hatay, Kahramanmaraş, Kilis, Osmaniye, Gaziantep, Malatya, Şanlıurfa, Diyarbakır, Elazığ and Adana. These provinces are home to about 14 million people, including around 2 million Syrian refugees.

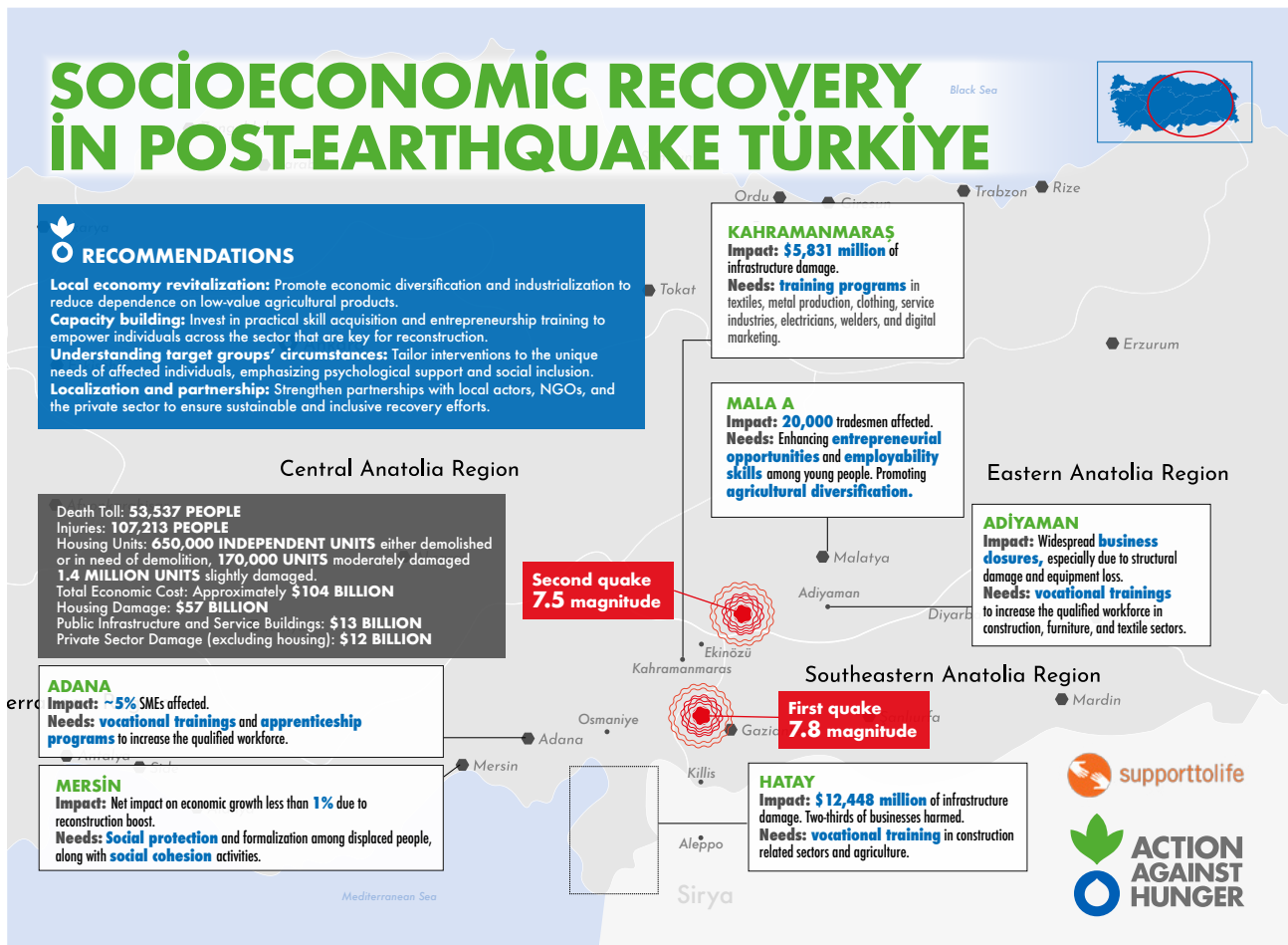
Rural areas, particularly in Adıyaman province, heavily relied on agriculture and animal husbandry as primary sources of livelihood. The aftermath of the earthquake resulted in significant setbacks for these sectors. Fields and crops suffered damage, rendering agricultural activities impossible in some regions. Livestock, including cattle, sheep, goats, beehives, and poultry, faced substantial losses, profoundly disrupting the rural economy.

The earthquake's impact extended beyond agriculture, affecting various trades and industries. Small and medium-sized businesses, essential for rural development, were destroyed, leading to job losses. Additionally, damaged infrastructure,

---

1. Information sourced from statements made by Minister of Interior Ali Yerlikaya during the "Kahramanmaraş Centered Earthquakes Evaluation Meeting" held at the Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD) on February 4, 2023. <https://www.trthaber.com/haber/gundem/6-subat-depremlerinde-53-bin-537-canimizi-yitirdik-833953.html>

2. Ydın, B. (2024) "As We Leave Behind the First Year of the Earthquake." TEPAV Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey, Evaluation Note N202412, February 2024



including machinery, tools, barns, and irrigation systems, further compounded the challenges faced by rural communities.

The impact on urban settings was more pronounced with centers like Kahramanmaraş, which exhibited damaged yet partially operational markets and infrastructure. In contrast, the extensive destruction witnessed in Antakya had longer-lasting repercussions. Small and medium businesses, ranging from furniture shops to restaurants, bore the brunt of the destruction, leading to widespread income loss.

Among the severely affected sectors, the textile industry, a cornerstone of employment in the region, experienced substantial setbacks. Factories were destroyed, exacerbating the crisis due to the concurrent migration of skilled workers. This dual shock contributed to increased unemployment and economic instability, especially in urban centers.

Despite significant steps in providing registered refugees with access to education and healthcare, many face barriers such as language difficulties,

limited job opportunities, and discrimination, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). After years of displacement and a lack of stable income, many refugees have exhausted their resources. Consequently, these pre-existing vulnerabilities left refugees in Türkiye in desperate need of assistance following the earthquakes, alongside the broader affected population.

Over a year after the earthquake, challenges remain substantial for both the refugee and host populations, with living conditions still dire. Millions of people are still living in temporary shelters, most with only basic services<sup>3</sup>. The region's economy is devastated; businesses that survived the earthquakes are now struggling with a severe labor shortage due to the exodus of up to five million people, whose return depends on the restoration of decent living conditions<sup>4</sup>.

3. [One Year Since the Earthquakes in Turkey and Syria | Action Against Hunger](#)

4. [One year after Türkiye's earthquakes, recovery takes many forms | United Nations Development Programme \(undp.org\)](#)



## METHODOLOGY

The socioeconomic inclusion assessment builds upon findings from an initial remote assessment conducted in December 2023 and integrates primary data collected through workshops, interviews, and focus group discussions with stakeholders in March and April 2024. Data collection took place in the provinces of Adıyaman, Adana, Hatay, Kahramanmaraş, Malatya, Mersin, and Gaziantep.

Forty-five stakeholders were interviewed across the six provinces, including representatives from the private sector, chambers of commerce, chambers of tradesmen and craftsmen, private enterprises, NGOs and civil society organizations, academic and research institutions, business development organizations (BDOs), government agencies (including local delegations of İşkur, the Turkish employment agency), community centers, and information hubs. Sampling was purposive, aiming to capture a broad range of perspectives and experiences relevant to socioeconomic inclusion efforts in the earthquake-affected regions. Additionally, 8 focus group discussions were carried out in Hatay, Kahramanmaraş and Mersin, engaging men and women living in temporary camps.

The research design primarily utilized qualitative techniques, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the socioeconomic dynamics in the target areas by integrating existing quantitative data with diverse perspectives from stakeholders in different sectors. Prior to data collection, the teams involved met to review the tools, provide suggestions, and ensure buy-in and agreement on the guidelines. Research protocols, including instructions on how to conduct the interviews and focus groups, were agreed upon to ensure that all

researchers followed a standardized procedure. Semi-structured interview guides were developed to ensure consistency across data collection activities in the different provinces. Trained staff from both Support to Life and Action Against Hunger, with expertise in socioeconomic development and qualitative research methodologies, facilitated the interviews and focus group discussions.

The topics covered during the interviews included the current landscape and challenges in the labor market, specific challenges faced by job seekers, self-employment as an alternative option, existing and potential partnerships, environmental practices, and sustainability. Data collection took place in person to foster rapport and enable nuanced exploration of participants' insights and perspectives. The focus group discussions were divided by sex to ensure confidentiality and encourage openness among participants, with debate encouraged among them.

Data analysis involved thematic coding of qualitative data obtained from interviews and focus group discussions and cross-checking with existing data. A geographical analysis was carried out for each province, allowing the emergence of common threads across geographies, which were further explored.

Limitations of the methodology include the inherent subjectivity of qualitative research, potential bias in participant selection, and constraints associated with data collection in post-disaster contexts. Efforts were made to mitigate these limitations through rigorous training of research personnel, transparent reporting of methods and findings, and triangulation of data from multiple sources.



# FINDINGS

## 1

## THEMATIC ANALYSIS

This chapter aims to provide insights into the common trends and themes that emerged across these provinces, offering a comprehensive understanding of the general situation in the region most affected by the disaster.



# 1) RECONSTRUCTION AND ECONOMIC RECOVERY

Hatay, February 2023.

© Ana Mora Segura for Action Against Hunger.



## JOB SEEKING FOR YOUTH

Young people often lack the necessary job search skills. This, combined with a tendency to be selective about job choices, contributes to a pervasive sense of job dissatisfaction among youth.

Investing in quality education and aligning skills development initiatives with labor market needs are crucial. Addressing barriers such as high costs, inadequate infrastructure, and gender disparities in education will enhance youth employability.

Additionally, encouraging youth engagement in decision-making processes and fostering an entrepreneurial culture, especially in rural areas, is essential.

The earthquake had a profound impact on the economic dynamics across the earthquake-affected region. The formal workforce has seen a decline of 23.6%, translating to 446,000 fewer workers, and workplaces have witnessed a significant drop of around 30.2%. In Adiyaman, Hatay, Malatya, and Kahramanmaraş provinces, these reductions have surpassed 50%<sup>5</sup>.

A common theme mentioned by stakeholders in different localities is the critical shortage of skilled labor, which significantly hinders economic recovery and growth. The earthquake disrupted numerous sectors: in Adiyaman and Hatay, the construction and furniture sectors experienced heightened demand, contrasting with Adana's emphasis on agricultural productivity and Malatya's focus on maintaining trade activities despite infrastructural losses.

Migration dynamics and social safety net programs, such as the Community Support Programs (TYP) and the Kızılay Card, contribute to the shortage of skilled labor, a topic that will be discussed in more detail in the following chapters. Across the six provinces, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) faced substantial operational challenges. Businesses in Adiyaman, Hatay, Kahramanmaraş, and Malatya struggled with structural damages and equipment losses, while Adana and Mersin reported difficulties in maintaining production due to a lack of qualified personnel. A generalized reduction in product and

service demand and market imbalances exacerbated the challenges faced by SMEs.

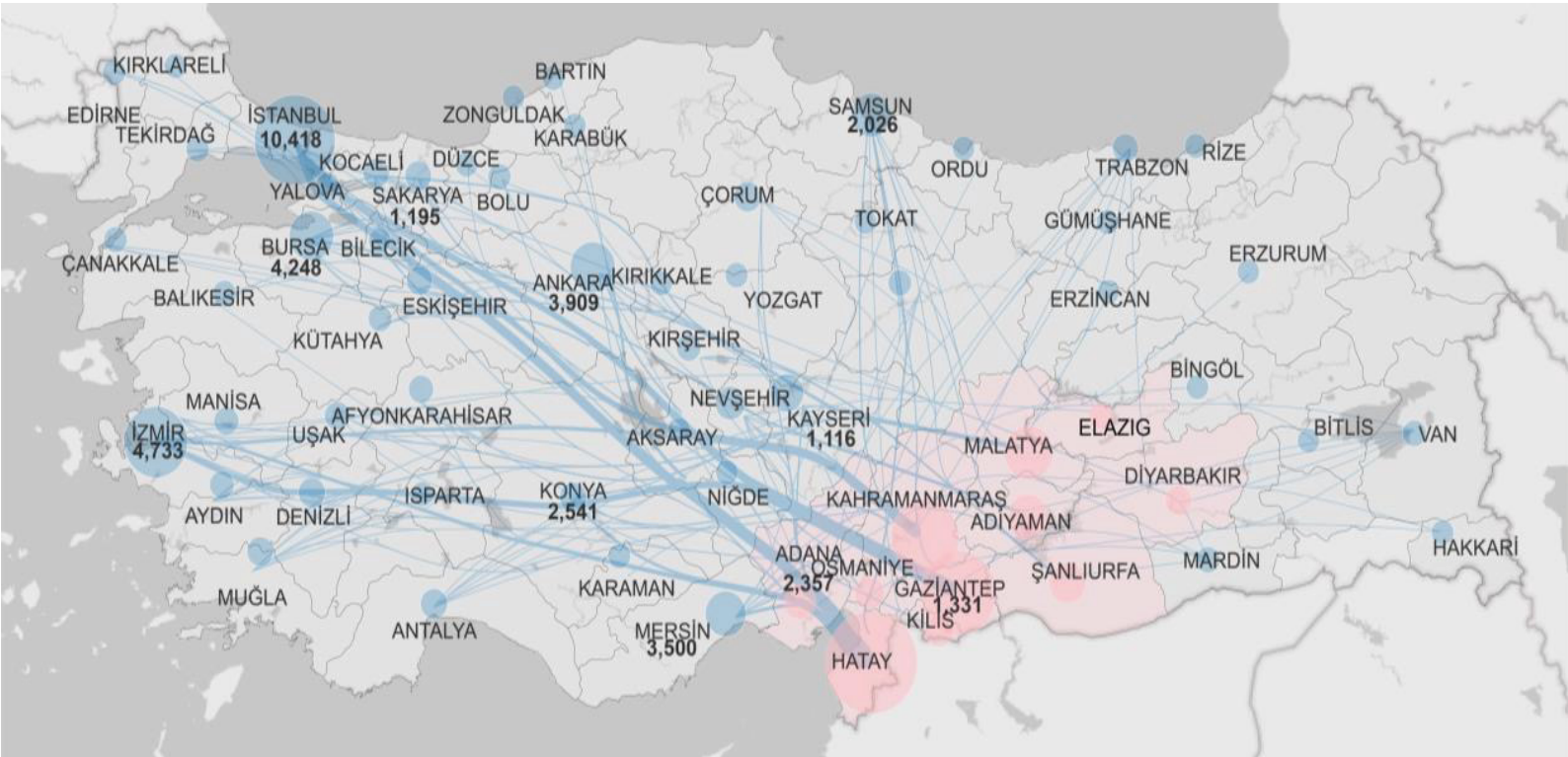
Reconstruction efforts are heavily dependent on skilled labor, which is in acute shortage across all affected areas. Vocational training emerges as a potential solution, with stakeholders emphasizing the need for targeted programs to stimulate the labor supply. As the region saw extensive damage or destruction of over 700,000 buildings<sup>6</sup>, that applies particularly to the urgent need for workers in all fields related to reconstruction.

In Hatay, Adiyaman, Kahramanmaraş, and Malatya, there is an important need for vocational training in fields like furniture upholstery, construction, and for electricians and welders. The assessment further reveals a shared focus on diversifying economic activities and enhancing local capacities, particularly for agricultural products. In rural areas and regions where agriculture plays a prominent role in the local economy, promoting crop diversification is identified as a means to stimulate local economies and reduce seasonal labor dependence. Targeted agricultural training to improve productivity was also emphasized.

5. [YASSER HASSAN, ILO Director for Türkiye | International Labour Organization](#)

6. [Turkey's construction sector struggles to build | AGBI](#)

## 2) MIGRATION DYNAMICS AND IMPACT



**Image 2** Map of Provincial Movement: Blue dots are the provinces of arrival. Source: Inter-Agency Population Movement Tracker.

The earthquake significantly influenced migration patterns in the provinces of Adana, Adıyaman, Hatay, Kahramanmaraş, Malatya, and Mersin. Rural areas in Adana experienced an influx of migrants from earthquake-affected cities, altering the demographic and economic landscape. Despite rural areas offering fewer opportunities compared to cities, rising rental costs forced many individuals to relocate to distant areas, disconnecting them further from viable employment prospects. Bureaucratic hurdles, such as obtaining road and work permits restricted to specific geographic areas, compounded these challenges. According to a UNHCR report from January 2024, refugees returning to earthquake-affected provinces frequently cited the uncertainty of extending travel permits' validity (18%) and other bureaucratic requirements (14%) as significant obstacle<sup>7</sup>.

In Adıyaman, Hatay, Kahramanmaraş, and Malatya the migration of skilled workers exacerbated labor shortages, hindering business continuity across various sectors and further complicating the region's economic recovery. Social cohesion emerged as a significant issue, with companies struggling to integrate refugees and other migrant workers.

Training programs focused on basic business rules, working principles, and cultural adaptation have shown potential for positively impacting economic recovery.

Mersin, which experienced the highest influx of migrants post-earthquake, was initially unprepared to accommodate the growing population. Refugees and migrants in Mersin, as in other provinces, struggled with language barriers, significantly impacting their ability to integrate into the local workforce and society. Seasonal migration patterns, with tent areas next to agricultural fields, illustrated the persistent complexities of refugee livelihoods.

Overall, migration dynamics across these provinces highlighted the critical need for targeted interventions to address social cohesion, language barriers, and bureaucratic challenges to foster sustainable economic recovery and integration of displaced populations.

<sup>7</sup> UNHCR. (2023). Population dynamics post-earthquake in Türkiye. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

### 3) MOTIVATION

Different perspectives exist regarding the motivation of individuals to participate in the labor market post-earthquake, influenced by psychological well-being and the presence of social safety net programs. Over a year later, trauma continues to play an important role in the economic reintegration of people affected by the disaster. These factors significantly influence attitudes towards both employment and self-employment, and the interpretation of these attitudes varies among different stakeholders.

Stakeholder interviews reveal a multifaceted landscape of motivations. Low-income individuals, reliant on social assistance like the Kızılay Card, often perceive participation in employment projects as a risk to their financial stability. Conversely, participants in the focus group conducted in Hatay with beneficiaries of SRP's Mother Baby Friendly Space (MBFS)<sup>8</sup> express a fervent desire for long-term income solutions, driven by aspirations to reclaim dignified living standards.

Private sector interviewees offer a distinct perspective on social safety nets like the Community Support Programs (TYP) introduced post-earthquake. While acknowledging the noble intention behind these initiatives to foster skill development and employment, many within the private sector express concern over the strain it has placed on industries already grappling with shortages in trained personnel, as people allegedly prefer to engage in these programs rather than in formal employment within existing businesses.

Gender dynamics significantly influence motivation levels. Women, though eager for vocational training to establish potential home-based businesses, encounter barriers stemming from traditional gender roles and familial expectations. While Syrian women in Hatay demonstrated enthusiasm for engaging in training opportunities to alleviate challenges faced in the camps, those in Kahramanmaraş voiced concerns about the limited job opportunities suitable for women's working conditions and resistance from families.

Men living in camps demonstrate a robust drive to secure employment or pursue self-employment. Conversely, women's motivation is tempered by economic constraints and barriers to labor market entry. Issues such as sub-minimum wages and harsh working conditions persist, contributing to poor attendance and low demand for certain vocational courses.

Hatay, January 2024.

© Özge Sebzeci / DEC for Action Against Hunger.



#### WORKING WITH REFUGEE WOMEN

The economic and psychosocial effects of the earthquake have significantly hindered the employment of refugee women. Lack of motivation, dependence on aid, and heightened insecurity further exacerbate the challenges. Women often undertake extensive caregiving responsibilities, which lead them to rely on home-based work supported by organizations. This reliance limits their participation in the formal workforce and social life.

To foster socio-economic integration, it is key to implement comprehensive women's empowerment programs and livelihood activities. These initiatives should address the unique barriers faced by refugee women, promoting their active engagement in the registered workforce and broader community.

8. *The Baby Friendly Spaces is a model of intervention for a holistic program to support pregnant, lactating women and their children in emergency situations. Baby Friendly Spaces: A Technical Manual | Action Against Hunger*



## 4) DECENT WORK AND LIVING CONDITIONS

The challenges faced by individuals in securing decent work and improving living conditions are deeply intertwined with their motivation to participate in the labor market post-earthquake, which was dealt with in the previous section.

In the aftermath of the earthquake, people face numerous challenges in securing employment, with informal labor playing a significant role. According to calculations made by the International Labour Organization, using TURKSTAT data, while the unregistered employment rate is 29% throughout the country, this rate is 10 points higher in the disaster area. Informal employment rates are even higher in specific sectors, such as 89% in agriculture and 33.7% in construction in the disaster-affected regions<sup>9</sup>. Jobs available for low-skilled people and those living in camps are temporary, primarily in the agriculture and construction sectors. This uncertainty creates a vicious cycle, preventing individuals and families from planning improvements in their personal and professional circumstances.

Transportation and the rising cost of rent pose substantial challenges for job seekers, particularly those residing in rural areas. The harsh living conditions following the earthquake further exacerbate these challenges, making it difficult for individuals to establish stability in new and unfamiliar cities. As public services have not yet been restored and urban life and facilities have yet to be revitalized, many people residing in camps report struggling to meet basic needs, adding to the complexity of securing employment. Additionally, the lack of economic and social incentives, coupled with high rates of informal employment and limited access to capital, severely restricts opportunities for formal employment and entrepreneurship, particularly for vulnerable groups such as refugees and low-skilled workers.

For women, the challenges are compounded by economic constraints and barriers to accessing the labor market. The severe living conditions, particularly in the camps, leave women with little privacy and feeling fatigued, reducing their energy to seek employment. Additionally, the pervasive fear of harassment further discourages them from seeking employment, compounding the difficulties they face in achieving economic stability and independence. Women who previously worked from home have lost their means of livelihood, further compounding their difficulties.

The psychological toll of the earthquake intertwines with these harsh living conditions, significantly

### WORKING IN INFORMAL CAMPS

**When providing aid in informal camps, immediate necessities like food, water, shelter, medical care, and mental health support must be prioritized. Programs should be designed with cultural sensitivity and address the specific needs of women and children.**

**Effective coordination with local authorities and NGOs is crucial to prevent overlapping efforts and ensure efficient distribution of resources. Encouraging the involvement of the community in decision-making fosters trust and ensures that interventions are appropriate and impactful.**

impacting mental well-being<sup>10</sup>. Over a year after the earthquake, mental health remains a significant concern for most people interviewed, with substantial pressure from their families and communities reported by both women and men. This pressure arises, among other things, from the traditional gender roles assigned to individuals, such as provider, protector, and decision-maker, which become increasingly difficult to fulfill given the circumstances. The pervasive uncertainty about the future stands out as one of the most impactful factors affecting their mental well-being.

Refugees and migrant individuals face additional barriers in securing decent jobs due to their limited knowledge of the Turkish language and the requirements needed for formal employment. Language barriers significantly hinder their ability to find work, while financial constraints make self-employment a hardly viable option, especially for vulnerable groups.

9. Ganioglu, Z., Özcan, N. Ş., Çelenk, E., & Cünedioğlu, E. (2023). *Assessing the local labour market dynamics and skills needs following the earthquakes in Türkiye*. International Labour Organization. *Assessing the Local Labour Market Dynamics and Skills Needs Following the Earthquakes in Türkiye | International Labour Organization (ilo.org)*

10. <https://www.actionagainsthunger.org/story/supporting-mental-health-and-nutrition-needs-of-earthquake-survivors-in-turkey-and-syria/>



## 5) COLLABORATIONS

Strengthening partnerships could significantly amplify the impact of recovery efforts and enhance socioeconomic inclusion in the areas affected by the 2023 earthquake. Collaborations between NGOs specializing in livelihood support and private sector entities can provide essential resources, expertise, and market access, supporting sustainable employment opportunities. Integrating with market actors is crucial when implementing economic development projects, and vocational training should be organized based on thorough market assessments.

Effective vocational training programs rely on collaborative efforts among organizations, NGOs, and public institutions. These partnerships are essential for tailoring training programs to meet the specific needs of the local community. Across the different provinces, the private sector has expressed a strong interest in collaborating on projects that equip individuals with necessary skills and job opportunities, while benefiting companies by providing skilled labor force. Chambers of tradesmen and craftsmen are also keen to partner with NGOs to support local businesses and to train qualified personnel. Such collaborations can bolster local economies by ensuring businesses have the skilled workers they need to thrive.

For instance, the “Building Community-Based Models for Earthquake Recovery through Vocational Training, Employment and Social Services” initiative, funded by UKAID and supported by the UNDP, has facilitated such collaborations by engaging various municipalities and chambers to develop and execute vocational training programs, business development services and mentorship, targeting earthquake survivors<sup>11</sup>.

For social cohesion activities, collaboration with the employment agency İŞKUR can be highly beneficial. For example, in Mersin, İŞKUR extensively engages with NGOs to implement projects aimed at addressing employment challenges. These collaborations can help bridge gaps between job seekers and employment opportunities, fostering a more inclusive and resilient community.

11. [Building community-based models for earthquake recovery through vocational training, employment and social services | United Nations Development Programme \(undp.org\)](https://undp.org)

Adana, February 2023.

© Ana Mora Segura for Action Against Hunger.

### SUPPORT TO LIFE NETWORK OF COLLABORATIONS

Over the years, Support to Life has built a broad network of collaborations with international NGOs, UN agencies, and local organizations, which was crucial following the 2023 earthquake.

These partnerships enabled swift resource mobilization, effective emergency response coordination, and efficient aid distribution. By sharing expertise, they addressed complex needs like food security, shelter, and psychosocial support.

This collaborative approach greatly improved the reach and impact of their humanitarian efforts, ensuring timely and comprehensive aid to affected communities appropriate and impactful.





# 2

## GEOGRAPHICAL ANALYSIS

This chapter presents an analysis of each of the six provinces covered during the assessment: Adana, Adiyaman, Hatay, Kahramanmaras, Malatya, and Mersin. In each province, stakeholders offered diverse perspectives and interests, highlighting the complex and multifaceted nature of post-disaster recovery. At times, the information presented may seem contradictory; however, this reflects the diverse realities on the ground and is important for understanding the unique challenges and needs of each area. Stakeholders' varying viewpoints underscore the complex interplay of local conditions, socio-economic dynamics, and cultural factors influencing recovery efforts.

Common themes emerged from the interviews conducted across the six provinces, including the economic landscape and how the earthquake shaped changes in labor demand and supply across different sectors. The inclusion of the people most affected by the earthquake was a central topic in conversations held across the different provinces. Capacity building needs are also a prominent concern, with a unanimous call for enhanced skills development programs, although with nuances across different areas. Potential partnerships with public agencies, the private sector, academic institutions, and NGOs are seen as crucial for effective recovery efforts.

Hatay, January 2024.

© Özge Sebzeci / DEC for Action Against Hunger.





# 1) ADANA

Adana boasted a diverse economy before the earthquake of February 6, 2023. Its strategic location along the Mediterranean coast facilitated trade and commerce, with agriculture, textiles, and manufacturing playing key roles in the local economy. The Çukurova plain supported abundant citrus orchards, cotton fields, and vineyards. The Chamber of Commerce and Industry actively promoted business growth, fostering partnerships between local entrepreneurs and international markets. The Organized Industry Zone, a hub for industrial production, attracted investors and provided employment opportunities.

Despite Adana being relatively less affected than some other regions, the 2023 earthquake still had significant consequences. Supply chains were disrupted, production came to a halt, and many livelihoods were shattered due to the quake's impact.

The assessment involved a diverse range of stakeholders, including industry associations like the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Organized Industry Zone. International organizations such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM) provided essential support in assessing humanitarian needs, together with local academic institutions like Çukurova University and Çukurova Technopark, and government agencies like İŞKUR and KOSGEB.

## ECONOMIC LANDSCAPE

Adana's socioeconomic landscape is marked by diverse migration dynamics, particularly in relation to livelihoods. Rural areas witness an influx of migrants from cities affected by the earthquake, shaping the

**“BUSINESSES COMPLAIN THEY CANNOT FIND APPRENTICES TO TRAIN QUALIFIED PERSONNEL. SUPPORTING VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS AND APPRENTICE CENTERS IS THE BEST WAY TO INCREASE THE QUALIFIED WORKFORCE”**

*UNION OF CHAMBER OF MERCHANTS AND CRAFTSMEN, ADANA*

region's demographic and economic fabric. However, this migration brings forth a complex challenge: while rural areas offer fewer opportunities compared to cities, the surge in rental costs compels individuals to seek residence in distant areas. Consequently, this migration trend paradoxically disconnects them further from viable employment prospects, exacerbating the dilemma faced by migrants seeking sustainable livelihoods.

Adding to the complexities faced by migrant populations are various bureaucratic hurdles and obligations, including obtaining road permits and work permits, which are typically limited to specific geographic areas. Additionally, a significant obstacle is the language barrier, which further complicates integration into the local workforce and community.

According to the Union of Chamber of Merchants and Craftsmen, approximately 5% of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Adana were impacted by the earthquake. These enterprises are primarily concentrated in sectors such as the Karşıyaka Metal Industry and Furniture Makers' sites.

In navigating the challenges posed by post-disaster recovery the importance of technology-based solutions was stressed by representatives from Petek Yazılım, a company specialized in providing software solutions for SMEs, underscoring the role of innovation in aiding post-disaster rehabilitation projects and facilitating the recovery process.

## CAPACITY BUILDING NEEDS

The challenges faced by businesses in Adana in finding apprentices to train as qualified personnel are highlighted by the Union of Chamber of Merchants and Craftsmen. To address this issue and bolster the qualified workforce in the labor market, there is a pressing need to support vocational schools and apprentice centers. Moreover, efforts should be directed towards training educators in vocational education, thus enhancing the quality of training provided.

In order to enhance productivity in the agricultural sector, the importance of providing targeted training to individuals based on local needs assessments was reported. For instance, specialized training in tasks such as tree pruning or orange harvesting/planting can be beneficial to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in agricultural practices.



At the 'Umuthane' sewing workshop, established by Support to Life in Umutkent Hakan Kozan Settlement in Adıyaman, women not only gain employment opportunities through sewing, but also participate in information sessions on women's rights.

© Suppora To Life/ Çiğdem Güner.

Specific areas that could benefit from trained personnel are CNC (Computer Numerical Control) operation and argon welding. However, there is currently a lack of training programs or other activities, such as apprenticeships and certification programs for migrant workers, available to address this demand, indicating a gap in workforce development initiatives.

Entrepreneurship and production are also identified as areas deserving of support and incentivization, particularly in regions affected by the earthquake and neighboring provinces. This could be achieved through the provision of training programs covering topics such as business management, financial planning, and marketing strategies, as well as through grants and low-interest loan opportunities aimed at fostering entrepreneurial initiatives. Additionally, efforts should be made to facilitate job placement activities and enhance the capacities of businesses to absorb the workforce effectively.

## ALLIANCES AND COLLABORATIONS

In the field of livelihoods, a robust collaboration network thrives in Adana, fostering synergies among various stakeholders. To further enhance coordination and cooperation, the establishment of a formal coordination mechanism involving the Chamber of

Industry, İŞKUR, private companies, and NGOs could be explored.

The Union of Chamber of Merchants and Craftsmen plays a pivotal role in facilitating livelihood opportunities, with ongoing collaborations with prominent organizations such as IOM and the Chamber of Commerce. Notably, the Union provides support in collaboration with the International Labour Organization (ILO) for company registration and licensing for individuals with GK status, along with facilitating referrals to NGOs and job placements. Furthermore, they extend support for screening approvals and work permits for refugees, offering comprehensive assistance throughout the application process and regulatory compliance for those aspiring to establish businesses.

In fostering the development of the software sector in Adana, stakeholders emphasize the importance of collaboration with local universities. Companies like Petek Yazılım actively engage in organizing internship programs, providing students with practical exposure and hands-on experience. Moreover, there is a strong commitment to nurturing talent within the region through training and mentorship programs. These initiatives aim to inspire and empower young individuals to pursue education and careers in software development, thereby contributing to the growth and dynamism of the local economy.



## 2) ADIYAMAN



Adiyaman.

© Support To Life/ Kerem Uzel.

Adiyaman had a diverse economy before the seismic events. Livestock and agriculture, particularly olive and pistachio cultivation, formed the backbone of livelihoods. Traditional crafts, such as carpet weaving and pottery, thrived alongside small-scale manufacturing. The Chamber of Commerce and Industry played a key role in fostering trade relations, while Textile Fabrics contributed significantly to employment. The Economic Empowerment Sector, led by the Sector Manager, aimed to uplift marginalized communities through micro-enterprises. The Chamber of Tradesmen and Craftsmen supported local artisans, ensuring their sustainability.

The earthquake of February 2023 disrupted Adiyaman's socioeconomic fabric. Infrastructure damage, loss of agricultural land, and disrupted supply chains led to economic instability. Businesses faced closures, affecting livelihoods. Reconstruction became a priority, with diverse stakeholders actively involved. The earthquake underscored the need for coordinated efforts to restore economic activities and contribute to the recovery of affected communities.

Stakeholders in Adiyaman, including the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Chamber of Tradesmen and Craftsmen, and Habitat, among others, have been instrumental in assessing and addressing the socioeconomic challenges post-earthquake. Their collaborative efforts, along with the engagement of business development organizations (BDOs), governmental agencies like KOSGEB and the Provincial Directorate of Agriculture and Forestry, and international organizations such as IOM and Uluslararası Göç ve Dayanışma Derneği, is key for promoting socioeconomic inclusion and fostering sustainable development in Adiyaman Province.

### ECONOMIC LANDSCAPE

Before the earthquake, Adiyaman faced employment challenges, exacerbated by a cascade of economic disruptions after the disaster, with significant impacts on employment and business operations. According to the Chamber of Commerce and Industry a substantial decline in active businesses was reported, with many of them suffering structural damages and loss of equipment.



## “EMPLOYING REFUGEES IS CHALLENGING DUE TO THE WORK PERMIT PROCESSES. MOREOVER, SOCIAL COHESION IS VERY DIFFICULT ON BOTH SIDES, WHICH IS ONE OF THE MAJOR OBSTACLES FOR US.”

*DIRECTOR OF TEXTILE FACTORY, ADIYAMAN*

The construction and furniture sectors experienced a surge in demand post-earthquake, overshadowing the previously strong textile industry in terms of employment opportunities. Yet, finding qualified personnel remains a challenge across sectors. Moreover, the migration of skilled workers worsened the shortage of labor, hindering business continuity in different sectors.

Business restoration encountered multifaceted challenges, including access to finance, insufficient public support, and inflation escalating employer costs. The resulting market imbalances crippled production and hindered sales, pushing some businesses to the brink of collapse. Despite these challenges, stakeholders highlighted opportunities for revitalization, including support for branding and product quality improvement, particularly in agriculture and food processing. Infrastructural enhancements, such as irrigation projects, were mentioned as essential for agricultural sustainability.

## PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES LINKED TO INCLUSION

Since the earthquake, the Community Support Programs (TYP) have presented a double-edged sword for the economic recovery of the province, as articulated by some interviewees. While intended to provide opportunities for skill development and employment, the influx of workers into these programs has left industries grappling with shortages in trained personnel. Many master employees, crucial for providing necessary training, are now engaged in Community Support Programs, exacerbating the skills gap within various sectors, such as the operation and repair of specialized machinery in the agricultural and construction sectors.

Transportation and the escalation of rental costs pose substantial challenges for job seekers, particularly those residing in rural areas. Individuals whose workplaces were destroyed, and warehouses collapsed encountered numerous difficulties concerning access to finance.

Financial burdens associated with providing work permits is cited as a barrier to hiring refugee workers, contributing to their exclusion from the labor market. However, it is notable that what creates obstacles to work permits is often employers' prejudice and lack of knowledge about the application process, rather than their inability to afford the fee, which currently stands at 3,297.4 TRY.

While adaptation training programs have proven effective in facilitating the integration of refugee



Adiyaman.

© Support To Life/ Kerem Uzel.



Adıyaman.

© Support To Life / Özgür Doğan.

employees, challenges such as demands to waive insurance payments and lack of childcare support persist. Women, in particular, face significant hurdles balancing caregiving responsibilities with employment due to the absence of nursery support and financial strain.

## CAPACITY BUILDING NEEDS

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry, with support from the European Union, is actively conducting vocational training courses aimed at empowering women in various fields such as gastronomy, beauty, and agriculture, particularly in rural areas. Despite these efforts, representatives from the Chamber of Commerce have noted an oversupply of vocational training in local food production and carpet weaving, sectors which do not align with current labor market demands.

In urban areas, the textile sector, once thriving, has faced significant challenges following the 2023 earthquake, resulting in unfulfilled orders and a subsequent demand for labor. This sector, known for offering job opportunities with decent working conditions suitable for women, now requires extensive capacity building to address the persistent shortage of personnel. Additionally, the furniture and construction sectors have reported a scarcity of qualified workers, with specific needs in areas such as drilling. The service sector also holds potential for job creation, exemplified by the growing call center industry.

In rural areas, there is a critical need to enhance the added value of agricultural products. This includes capacity building and the provision of machinery for the production of dairy products, tomato paste, fodder crushing, grape pressing, olive oil processing, and the crushing of almonds and walnuts. Social

cohesion remains a significant challenge in workforce integration, with companies reportedly seeking qualified and disciplined workers. Training programs focused on basic business rules and working principles have shown potential for positively impacting the province's economic recovery. Additionally, cultural adaptation training has proven effective in facilitating the integration of refugees into the local workforce. Businesses also require support in areas such as branding and marketing to enhance their market presence.

## ALLIANCES AND COLLABORATIONS

The private sector has expressed a keen interest in collaborating on projects that equip individuals with necessary skills and job opportunities while providing companies with the competencies they require. Chambers of tradesmen and craftsmen are particularly interested in partnering with NGOs to offer financial and in-kind support to local businesses and to train qualified personnel.

For social cohesion activities, it can be beneficial to collaborate with the employment agency İŞKUR. This collaboration is necessary to engage both companies and job seekers in the recruitment and induction process, ensuring a smoother integration of the workforce.

The Adıyaman Chamber of Commerce and Industry Vocational Training Center (ASGEM) serves as an exemplary model for such initiatives. Established to train the qualified personnel required by the Adıyaman industry, ASGEM draws on various examples of vocational training centers from Europe and other regions. Further support and development of such centers can enhance their impact and effectiveness in addressing local industry needs.

### 3) HATAY

Hatay, February 2023.



© Ana Mora Segura for Action Against Hunger.

Before the 2023 earthquake, Hatay province boasted a diverse economy, with trade, agriculture, and tourism being the main economic forces. The main crops harvested in Hatay province were citrus fruits, olives, and cotton. The port of İskenderun additionally played a pivotal role in regional commerce, connecting Hatay to global markets. Moreover, small-scale industries, such as textiles and food processing, contributed to local employment.

The earthquake disrupted Hatay's economic fabric. Infrastructure damage amounted to \$12,448 million, making Hatay the most affected province

**“I COLLECT GARBAGE FOR A LIVING. I WISH WE HAD PASSED AWAY DURING THE EARTHQUAKE. CONDITIONS IN THE CAMPS ARE UNBEARABLE.”**

WOMAN, UZUMDALI CAMP (HATAY)

in terms of direct damages. The disaster claimed 50,783 lives, with significant casualties in Hatay. Displacement and loss of homes exacerbated the situation, with 215,255 houses heavily damaged or destroyed. Agricultural lands were scarred, affecting crop yields and disrupting seasonal labor, hindering recovery efforts. The port of İskenderun faced disruptions, impacting trade flows. Hatay, together with Kahramanmaraş, registered the highest number of businesses harmed by the earthquake (two-thirds, according to estimates from the Ministry of Industry and Technology), leading to substantial unemployment<sup>12</sup>.

To assess socioeconomic inclusion challenges and opportunities in Hatay province, a diverse group of stakeholders was actively engaged in in-depth interviews and focus group discussions.

12. Ganioglu, Z., Özcan, N. Ş., Çelenk, E., & Cünedioğlu, E. (2023). Assessing the local labour market dynamics and skills needs following the earthquakes in Türkiye. International Labour Organization. *Assessing the Local Labour Market Dynamics and Skills Needs Following the Earthquakes in Türkiye* | International Labour Organization ([ilo.org](https://ilo.org)).



These included the local Chamber of Commerce & Industry, the Chamber of Craftsmen, local and international NGOs, the University of Hatay, cooperative groups, and İŞKUR.

## ECONOMIC LANDSCAPE

As skilled professionals left the urban centers of Hatay following the earthquake, there is a significant labor demand in sectors related to reconstruction efforts. Key professions in demand include furniture upholstery, shoemaking, food production, gastronomy, construction, and digital marketing. These sectors require skilled labor to support rebuilding efforts and revitalize the local economy.

Informal labor is also a significant aspect mentioned by the stakeholders interviewed for the assessment. Jobs available for low-skilled people and people living in the camps are temporary, mainly in the agriculture and construction sectors. This uncertainty creates a vicious circle, preventing people and families from planning improvements in their personal and professional circumstances.

Challenges such as high shop rental fees and limited resources further underscore the complexities of the employment landscape, requiring collaborative efforts to address these issues effectively. There is a reported need to support non-working and vulnerable women through cash support and employment opportunities, particularly in sectors like agriculture, knitting, sewing, embroidery, cooking, and laundry services.

## PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES LINKED TO INCLUSION

In the aftermath of the earthquake, refugees in Hatay face numerous challenges in securing employment. Language barriers significantly hinder their ability to find work, while financial constraints make self-employment a challenging alternative, especially for vulnerable groups. Additionally, the pervasive fear of harassment further discourages women from seeking employment, compounding the difficulties they face in achieving economic stability and independence.

Training opportunities are scarce in Hatay, as the earthquake hindered the opening of community centers and limited the availability of training spaces, including prefabricated venues, that could be used for vocational training or other socioeconomic inclusion activities. Power cuts and transportation conditions, particularly in rural areas, further complicate access to the few opportunities available.

Stakeholders interviewed for this assessment indicated that low-income individuals are disincentivized from participating in employment projects due to concerns about losing cash support from the Kızılay Card, a form of social assistance provided to low-income individuals. For many relying on this assistance, the fear of losing this financial support outweighs the potential benefits of participating in employment initiatives.

However, participants in the focus group discussions held in Hatay, both women and men, emphasized the importance of finding long-term solutions for income generation. There was widespread consensus among participants regarding the motivation to attend training and seek employment. Many see this as an opportunity to leave the camps and achieve their dreams of returning to a decent living.

Over a year after the earthquake, mental health remains a significant concern for most people engaged in the focus groups, with substantial pressure from their families and communities reported by both women and men. Many have postponed processing their trauma, focusing instead on immediate survival and basic needs, with the understanding that psychological issues will surface once physical conditions stabilize. The pervasive uncertainty about the future stands out as one of the most impactful factors affecting their mental well-being.

## CAPACITY BUILDING NEEDS

Across the stakeholders that were interviewed during the assessment there is a shared commitment to empower vulnerable populations, particularly women, vocational high school graduates, and individuals residing outside formal education structures.

**“PEOPLE FROM LOW-INCOME BACKGROUNDS EXPRESS INTEREST IN BENEFITING FROM EMPLOYMENT PROJECTS, BUT OFTEN REFRAIN FROM PARTICIPATING DUE TO CONCERNS ABOUT LOSING CASH SUPPORT FROM THE KIZILAY CARD”**

*ALTINÖZÜ HAZEK COOPERATIVE*

Central to their discourse is the recognition of practical skill acquisition as key to social and economic inclusion. The importance of hands-on training was widely emphasized, together with a departure from traditional theoretical approaches. Instead, there is a call for tailored programs in handicrafts like knitting, sewing, and embroidery, alongside technical proficiencies in construction, furniture upholstery, shoemaking, and food production.

Women engaged in focus group discussions expressed a preference for vocational training that could subsequently be used to develop home businesses, such as cooking. E-commerce and marketing were also mentioned as fields of interest for vocational training.

However, capacity building should extend beyond skill acquisition, embracing a holistic vision which encompasses digital literacy, entrepreneurship, and market adaptation. Stakeholders emphasize the urgency of equipping communities with digital skills, navigating the growing opportunities available in terms of e-commerce and digital marketing. Concurrently, they also stress the importance of courses in entrepreneurship and business management, nurturing a culture of innovation and self-reliance.

Infrastructure and support mechanisms are key to making capacity building endeavors most effective. The need for vocational training centers, equipped with advanced facilities, resonated across multiple interviews. Financial assistance, in the form of grants and loans, emerges as a key for entrepreneurship, empowering individuals to translate training into tangible economic ventures.

**“THE LIVELIHOOD RESOURCES TRAININGS SHOULD TARGET VOCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES, INDIVIDUALS OUTSIDE OF FORMAL EDUCATION, WOMEN SEEKING TO ENGAGE IN PRODUCTION, AND SYRIAN WOMEN”**

*LEYLA AYVAZOGLU, ALTINÖZÜ HAZEK COOPERATIVE*



**Hatay, March 2024.**

© Mahmoud Boudaqa for SRP.

## **ALLIANCES AND COLLABORATIONS**

In the efforts to revitalize the livelihoods sector in Hatay, several active alliances and collaborations have been established. The Altınözü HAZEK Cooperative has ongoing projects in collaboration with NGOs and institutions such as the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and the Chamber of Industry. Similarly, the Chamber of Tradesmen and Craftsmen collaborates with UNICEF on Child Labor projects and partners with the Ministry of National Education for skills development initiatives.

Moving forward, potential partnerships could further enhance the impact of revitalization efforts. Opportunities for collaboration between NGOs specializing in livelihood support and private sector entities could provide resources, expertise, and market access to support sustainable employment opportunities. Emphasizing collaboration with a diverse range of stakeholders will ensure a holistic approach to addressing the livelihood challenges in Hatay.

## 4) KAHRAMANMARAŞ

Before the earthquake, Kahramanmaraş' diverse economy included agricultural, particularly in the production of olives, figs, and grapes. It was also home to a thriving textile industry, contributing significantly to Türkiye's exports. Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) played a crucial role in the local economy, providing employment and fostering innovation. The province also had a growing tourism sector, thanks to its rich history and cultural heritage.

The two major earthquakes experienced within a span of nine hours on February 6, 2023, with epicenters near the city of Kahramanmaraş, significantly impacted various sectors, causing a major disruption in the region's economic activities. The two earthquakes resulted in widespread destruction throughout the province, with approximately 99,326 homes that were heavily damaged or completely destroyed, and an additional 17,887 were moderately damaged. In total, these damaged structures represent 24.35% of the total dwellings in the province. The economic cost of the damage in Kahramanmaraş

was estimated at 5.831 million USD, covering residential, non-residential, and infrastructure damages<sup>13</sup>.

In the framework of the present assessment, eight interviews were carried out with stakeholders from the public, private, and third sectors. Insights were provided into the multifaceted challenges faced by the province, from infrastructure damage to the disruption of economic activities. Their testimonies offer a panoramic view of the recovery efforts and the strategies employed to revive the province's economy. Additionally, a focus group discussion was organized with women from various backgrounds to gather their perspectives on the different issues at hand.

**13** Ganioğlu, Z., Özcan, N. Ş., Çelenk, E., & Cünedioğlu, E. (2023). *Assessing the local labour market dynamics and skills needs following the earthquakes in Türkiye*. International Labour Organization. *Assessing the Local Labour Market Dynamics and Skills Needs Following the Earthquakes in Türkiye* | International Labour Organization ([ilo.org](https://ilo.org))





The Nutrition Coordinator of the Action Against Hunger emergency pool discusses the needs in the first hours after the earthquakes with a doctor deployed at the Spanish Development Cooperation field hospital in Iskenderum, Hatay, February 2023

© paidfikiñiañioik for Action Against Hunger

## ECONOMIC LANDSCAPE

Throughout the Kahramanmaraş province, unregistered employment prevails due to perceived financial advantages for both employers and employees, driven by factors such as inadequate minimum wage levels and high insurance premiums.

Furthermore, a notable shortage of skilled workers persists, particularly in occupations such as electricians and welders, exacerbating the region's employment challenges. Despite these obstacles, Kahramanmaraş stands out for its diverse industrial landscape, including textile, gold processing, metal, and clothing sectors, offering employment opportunities. However, post-earthquake challenges, such as labor shortages in specific sectors like copper workmanship, continue to hinder the

province's economic recovery, underscoring the ongoing efforts needed in this regard.

Interestingly, the foreseen expansion of Kahramanmaraş into new sectors like the defense and aerospace industries presents opportunities for economic diversification and inclusion. With Tusaş expected to establish a facility in the city, there's a potential for skilled workers from diverse backgrounds to contribute to this burgeoning sector. Particularly, women with experience in fields like the metal kitchen industry are well-positioned to transition into roles within the aerospace industry, bringing valuable skills and expertise to propel Kahramanmaraş into a new era of industrial innovation and development.

## PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES LINKED TO INCLUSION

The impact of the disaster on the people of Kahramanmaraş is multifaceted, involving numerous challenges that have arisen. The psychological toll of the earthquake intertwines with the harsh living conditions in the camps, leaving women with little privacy and, as they report, feeling fatigued and desiring rest while residing in containers. Women who previously worked from home lost their means of livelihood, compounding their challenges.

**“I USED TO WORK AT HOME BEFORE THE EARTHQUAKE, BUT I COULD NOT CONTINUE IN THE CONTAINER AND I HAD TO GIVE UP MY ACTIVITY”**

*WOMAN, KAHRAMANMARAS*





Those who experienced loss within their families initially felt isolated from the community and subsequently encountered difficulties in forming new relationships.

Motivation emerges as a theme where viewpoints among different stakeholders diverge significantly. On one hand, women involved in the assessment express strong motivation to participate in training opportunities and pursue employment. Trainings provide avenues for social interaction and foster a sense of integration into the community, while employment offers a chance to escape the hardships of camp life and enhance living conditions. The desire to return to proper housing, rather than living in containers, is cited as a primary motivation. However, opportunities for decent employment and suitable working conditions tailored to women's needs are limited, with many available positions requiring physical labor and imposing restrictions based on gender and age groups.

On the other hand, representatives from the private sector highlight these challenges as a cause for reluctance toward work, compounded by psychological fatigue following the earthquake. Traditional gender roles and patriarchal structures also exert influence, limiting women's participation in the workforce. Many rural women face resistance from their spouses regarding employment. Despite the presence of diverse production sites in Kahramanmaraş, sectors like textiles and metal industries are predominantly populated by male workers, reflecting entrenched cultural norms. Women participating in focus group discussions confirm familial obstacles, as they are often expected to prioritize childcare over contributing to the family's livelihood.

Concerns regarding work permits and bureaucratic processes also loom large. Formal employment faces obstacles due to high insurance premiums and work permit fees, dissuading long-term employment commitments. Additionally, navigating bureaucratic procedures for permissions and registrations proves cumbersome, potentially

**“HOUSING IS THE PRIMARY CONCERN FOR PEOPLE IN THIS REGION, PRIMARILY DUE TO THE ESCALATING RENTAL PRICES.”**

*ELİF SENA KIRMIZIKAYA, UNIVERSITY INDUSTRY PUBLIC COOPERATION DEVELOPMENT AND RESEARCH CENTRE (USKİM)*

hindering the efficacy of employment initiatives. Relying on verbal permissions and grappling with bureaucratic hurdles add layers of complexity to efforts aimed at promoting.

## CAPACITY BUILDING NEEDS

A recurring theme highlighted in the conducted interviews underscores the significance of vocational training as a solution to address employment challenges and opportunities within the province. Across various sectors including textiles, metal production, clothing, and service industries, a notable shortage of skilled workers persists.

Emphasis is placed on the urgent need for vocational training programs to alleviate this shortage. Initiatives targeting fields such as electricians, welders, and digital marketing are particularly emphasized. Moreover, there is a collective recognition of the role of vocational training in empowering women and enhancing their workforce participation. Women participating in focus group discussions express keen interest in such training opportunities, especially if conducted within the camps, enabling them to balance their familial responsibilities with participation in training programs.

Recognizing the growing importance of digital marketing in today's business landscape, there is a notable acknowledgment of the need for capacity building in marketing strategies, particularly within local enterprises. Women express a strong interest in acquiring knowledge about online opportunities and marketing techniques. Initiatives like the Women's Hand in Industry Project by TOBB aim to foster entrepreneurship among rural women, overcoming challenges such as transportation barriers and cultural norms that traditionally hinder women's participation in the workforce.

## ALLIANCES AND COLLABORATIONS

Effective implementation of vocational training programs hinges on collaborative efforts between organizations, NGOs, and public institutions. These collaborations are deemed essential for tailoring training programs to meet the specific needs of the local community.

Furthermore, interviews underscore the significance of micro-grant projects in fostering entrepreneurship, with NGOs assuming a pivotal role in project execution. Collaborative initiatives, such as the partnership between DOĞAKA and KOSGEB, exemplify concerted efforts to provide grant support for entrepreneurial ventures.

## 5) MALATYA

Prior to the 2023 earthquake the key sectors of Malatya's economy included agriculture, tourism, and trade. The region was renowned for its apricot production, which contributed significantly to the local economy. Additionally, tobacco cultivation played a role in sustaining livelihoods. However, the earthquake disrupted these economic activities, impacting both production and trade.

Widespread devastation was caused by the earthquake throughout the province, with infrastructure, homes, and businesses severely affected, leading to displacement and economic disruption. Over 87,000 residents who had initially left the province after the earthquakes have reportedly returned, creating additional needs and pressure on services. Tent cities and hot meal distribution centers are being phased out, with a transition to container cities and support for independent cooking<sup>14</sup>.

Several stakeholders were engaged in the assessment, focusing on rural development, livelihood diversification, and sustainable recovery strategies. These stakeholders included the Chamber of Tradesmen and Craftsmen, the Euphrates Development Agency, a representative from the Faculty of Economic and Administrative Sciences at Inonu University, the International Organization for Migration, the Provincial Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, and the Türkiye Rural Development Support Institution (TKDK).

### ECONOMIC LANDSCAPE

The earthquake in Malatya had a profound impact on the local economy, with approximately 20,000 registered tradesmen affected by the disaster. Many of them saw their workplaces destroyed, particularly those located in the bustling bazaar center. In response, 6,000 shopkeepers applied for containers to temporarily resume their businesses, but the distribution process faced challenges. While 3,700 containers were allocated, some shopkeepers are still awaiting containers, and those provided were often situated in different parts of the city, prompting reluctance among tradesmen to relocate. A new bazaar is under construction in the city center, but it won't be completed until the end of 2025 and won't meet immediate needs.

The shortage of containers, particularly for tradesmen involved in furniture, carpet, or renovation works, has hindered their ability to resume operations effectively. Additionally, attempts to establish common bazaars for certain product categories, such as the Shoemakers Bazaar, encountered resistance from tradesmen who preferred to remain in their original locations. Furthermore, the disruption in production like bread due to safety concerns with bakery buildings compounded the economic strain faced by tradesmen. The exodus of skilled personnel

<sup>14</sup>. *Türkiye Earthquake Response 2023: Malatya Humanitarian Snapshot, as of 13 July 2023* | OCHA ([unocha.org](https://www.unocha.org))



Hatay, January 2024.



## “AGRICULTURAL PRODUCERS IN MALATYA DID NOT HAVE ANY PROBLEMS WITH THEIR FIELDS, BUT THEIR MACHINERY, PRODUCTS AND EQUIPMENT IN THE WAREHOUSES REMAINED UNDER THE DEBRIS”

*PROVINCIAL MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY*

from Malatya, coupled with housing shortages, exacerbates the difficulties in rebuilding the local economy and workforce.

Disparities between rural and urban areas in Malatya further complicate post-earthquake recovery. Rural tradesmen, unable to access containers, grapple with the loss of machinery and products buried under debris. Moreover, rising input costs and decreased incomes afflict agricultural producers, who predominantly operate as family businesses. Meanwhile, the integration of approximately 40,000 refugees adds another layer of complexity, with seasonal workers highlighting the need for basic amenities such as shelter, showers, and toilets.

### CAPACITY BUILDING NEEDS

Various organizations, including the Chamber of Tradesmen and Craftsmen, Chamber of Industry, and Public Education Centre, collaborate to implement apprenticeship programs aimed at cultivating craftsmanship. However, challenges arise as students exhibit reluctance to enroll in apprenticeship schools, and families prefer alternative educational paths. NGOs can bridge this gap by providing digitalization and e-commerce training to artisans, enabling them to market their products online and expand their customer base.

Organizing skills development programs for women and young people is considered essential for enhancing both entrepreneurial and employment opportunities and fostering economic empowerment. Young people in the job search process face significant challenges, including limited access to job opportunities, insufficient information about job search strategies, and a lack of understanding of sector expectations. Addressing these issues requires coordinated efforts from various stakeholders.

Despite the presence of women's cooperatives in Malatya, they face structural challenges hindering their growth and self-sustainability. These challenges

include limited market access, dependency on external support, lack of technical expertise, and inadequate marketing strategies. Efforts to strengthen cooperatives could involve capacity-building initiatives, such as project writing workshops and technical training sessions. Prioritizing areas like greenhouse farming, beekeeping, and commodity production can further bolster cooperative development and economic resilience.

Encouraging agricultural diversification beyond apricot production in Malatya presents an opportunity for economic growth and sustainability. Promoting the cultivation of crops like strawberries and sour cherries in various regions can stimulate local economies and reduce dependency on seasonal labor from outside Malatya. Additionally, supporting the production of medicinal aromatic plants in Malatya and Adiyaman, coupled with value-added processing initiatives, holds potential for enhancing local livelihoods and reducing import reliance.

NGOs play an important role in supporting aspiring entrepreneurs by providing guidance in business ideation, modeling, and strategy development. They can also facilitate access to grant programs and assist with application processes, particularly for individuals with innovative business concepts. Moreover, focusing on niche sectors such as dairy farming, greenhouse cultivation, and beekeeping can unlock new economic opportunities and promote sustainable livelihoods in both Adiyaman and Malatya provinces.

### ALLIANCES AND COLLABORATIONS

According to representatives from the private sector, the relationship between NGOs and other actors in Malatya needs improvement. Effective integration with market actors is essential when implementing economic development projects, and vocational training should be organized based on thorough market assessments. In the field of cooperativism, NGOs can provide crucial support in project writing and capacity building for women and individuals entering the production field.

Collaboration between local institutions is vital for effective skill development and vocational training. In Malatya, the Chamber of Tradesmen and Craftsmen, Chamber of Industry, Public Education Centre, and Directorate of National Education have developed various programs aimed at skill development and vocational training. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) also interacts with local actors through referrals from public institutions. Support from other stakeholders could help disseminate information about grant programs to the public more effectively.

## 6) MERSİN

Adıyaman.



© Support To Life / Kerem Uzel.

Unlike other provinces, Mersin was relatively less affected in terms of infrastructure disruption by the 2023 earthquake. The Ceyhan Port avoided significant damage, with operations temporarily interrupted but largely resumed by the end of the same week<sup>15</sup>. The Port of Mersin also played a key role in managing the aftermath of the earthquake<sup>16</sup>. Despite the challenges, the net impact of the earthquake on economic growth was less than 1 percentage point in 2023 as the boost from reconstruction offset the initial negative impact within the same year<sup>17</sup>.

However, approximately 400,000 survivors of February's earthquake arrived in the province, adding to the 237,466 Syrian refugees already residing there<sup>18</sup>. This influx initially created severe issues related to basic needs and accommodation. Over time, employment problems emerged due to the increased population. Given Mersin's relatively lower disaster impact and its strategic importance, it is likely to remain a preferred destination for migration in the event of future disasters. Therefore, its preparedness to future disasters is essential.

To identify the key issues at hand, several stakeholders from different fields have been

actively involved in the assessment. These include the Çukurova Development Agency, İŞKUR, the Mersin Metropolitan Municipality, the Mersin Competence and Digital Transformation Center, and Technoscope. Their participation aims to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the socio-economic challenges faced by Mersin.

### ECONOMIC LANDSCAPE

Mersin's economic landscape has undergone significant transformations over the years. Traditionally reliant on agriculture, the province has evolved into a thriving commercial and logistics hub, propelled by the expanding maritime transportation sector centered around Mersin Port.

15. [The economic and operational impacts in Syria-Turkey earthquake zones | S&P Global \(spglobal.com\)](#)

16. [Turkish port cities confronted by the consequences of an earthquake : Mersin leads aid efforts - AIVP](#)

17. [The impact of the 2023 earthquakes on Türkiye's economy: First estimates | CEPR](#)

18. [Massive domestic migration in wake of deadly earthquakes in Turkey | International News Others - Business Standard \(business-standard.com\)](#)



This port stands as the fastest-growing in Türkiye in terms of foreign trade volume, underscoring its role in driving economic growth and employment opportunities within the province. Moreover, with construction underway for the Taşucu Port, Mersin is expected to further solidify its position as a key player in the maritime industry, promising additional employment prospects.

The industrial sector in Mersin is also experiencing remarkable expansion, marked by a steady increase in formal employment opportunities. Currently, two Organized Industrial Zones are operational in the Tarsus district, with construction already underway for a third zone. This growth not only reinforces employment figures but also contributes to the diversification of Mersin's economic base. Concurrently, the service sector is witnessing a surge in employment opportunities, further amplifying Mersin's economic dynamism.

However, amidst the progress and growth, challenges persist, particularly regarding the employment of refugees and internally displaced people who have reached the areas following the 2023 earthquake. Many refugees find themselves engaged in informal employment, notably in the agricultural sector, where authorities have implemented measures to facilitate their participation through exemptions from work permits. Informal employment often involves seasonal agricultural labor, which, for some groups, has become a permanent fixture, shaping their way of life. Seasonal migration patterns emerge, with tent areas emerging next to agricultural fields, illustrating the persisting complexities of refugee livelihoods in Mersin.

## PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES LINKED TO INCLUSION

During the focus group discussions, among men living in camps, a strong motivation emerged to secure employment or become self-employed. In contrast, motivation among women to seek employment is notably weak. Current economic conditions and barriers to accessing the labor market significantly dampen their enthusiasm for job hunting or self-employment opportunities.

Living conditions have a profound impact on the motivation and ability of individuals to seek employment. After the earthquake, establishing stability in a new and unfamiliar city proved to be extremely difficult for many. They reported struggling to meet basic needs and survive, adding to the complexity of securing employment. For women, the challenges are compounded by their

**“IN FIVE YEARS, I ENVISION MYSELF IN A SECURE, FORMAL JOB, WHERE I CAN DEFEND MY RIGHTS, EARN A LIVING, AND STAND ON MY OWN TWO FEET.”**

*WOMAN, MERSIN*

current economic circumstances and the difficulty in accessing the labor market. The harsh living conditions in the aftermath of the earthquake have exacerbated these issues, making it even more challenging for them to feel motivated and capable of seeking employment.

Both men and women face significant barriers to employment and self-employment, albeit with some differences. The most significant barrier is the lack of experience, which leads to young people facing closed doors across the country. Gender barriers further complicate access to employment opportunities for women. The most critical issue faced by job seekers however remains the prevalence of wages below the minimum wage combined with harsh working conditions. Additionally, refugees and migrants face the language barrier, which remains a significant challenge for most of them.

## CAPACITY BUILDING NEEDS

Employers across various industries are facing a common challenge of finding qualified personnel trained in production-based industrial sectors, with a shortage of workers willing to engage in production roles ongoingly reported.

Efforts to address these challenges have led to collaborative initiatives involving the Governor's Office, Public Education Center, and Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Vocational courses tailored to meet the demands of the market have been organized, targeting the most sought-after professions. However, issues such as poor attendance and lack of motivation among beneficiaries remain prevalent, with some vocational courses, such as welding, experiencing low demand and high dropout rates.

One notable observation is the weak job search skills among the younger generation, coupled with a tendency towards selective job choices, which contributes to a pervasive sense of job dissatisfaction among youth.

Adıyaman.



© Support To Life/ Kerem Uzel

In response to emerging trends in the industrial sector, such as green transformation and lean production, efforts are underway to implement clean energy and production models. However, there is a growing concern regarding the potential shortage of qualified personnel specialized in green transformation in the future.

To address these challenges effectively, it is key for NGOs to adapt their employment-focused initiatives to current trends. This entails incorporating skill development and vocational training activities aimed at empowering young people with relevant competencies. Moreover, efforts should extend beyond job seekers to include activities geared towards enhancing the capacity of companies, thus fostering a more holistic approach to workforce development.

## ALLIANCES AND COLLABORATIONS

Mersin, having experienced the highest influx of migrants post-earthquake, faces challenges which include employment shortages and limited resources to accommodate the growing population. Collaboration between the private sector, local institutions and NGOs emerges as crucial in addressing these challenges and facilitating the integration of vulnerable groups into the workforce.

Given Mersin's expanding economy and increasing demand for labor, proactive measures are essential to anticipate future job needs. NGOs, alongside

government bodies and relevant institutions, play a pivotal role in this endeavour, particularly in integrating diverse and disadvantaged groups into employment opportunities. Notably, fostering collaboration with the private sector is imperative for the success of these efforts.

İŞKUR serves as a notable example of effective collaboration, as it extensively engages NGOs to implement projects aimed at addressing employment challenges. One interesting initiative is the Occupational Battery, a skills assessment tool employed by İŞKUR to facilitate the matching of job seekers with employers. Enhancing the technology behind this tool with stakeholder support could significantly improve the alignment of skills with employer needs.

Furthermore, the Model Factory initiative exemplifies successful collaboration among various stakeholders. Implemented in cooperation with the Ministry of Science Industry and Technology General Directorate of Productivity and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Model Factory offers manufacturing SMEs an opportunity to blend hands-on experience with theoretical training in lean production methods. Moreover, it extends support to young entrepreneurs by providing spaces and equipment for prototype development. Notably, the Model Factory welcomes collaboration with NGOs, underscoring the importance of collective efforts in fostering economic growth and entrepreneurship.



# 3

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Guided by the principles of converting adversity into opportunity, building back better, and prioritizing inclusive recovery, our assessment has identified key areas where concerted efforts can catalyze socioeconomic inclusion for the people most affected by the 2023 earthquakes. The first step towards socioeconomic inclusion is to recognize the potential for transformation inherent in times of crisis. The recommendations provided in this section focus on converting adversity into opportunity. By reframing challenges as opportunities for growth and innovation, the way can be paved for inclusive recovery strategies that empower marginalized communities and foster sustainable development.

Rebuilding in the aftermath of crisis offers a unique chance to create more resilient systems that leave no one behind. In this section, we outline specific recommendations for building back better, emphasizing the importance of sustainability, inclusivity, and community-led initiatives. By investing in green technologies, promoting job creation in emerging sectors, and strengthening social safety nets, more equitable communities can be promoted. Building back better requires a holistic approach that addresses the root causes of inequality and fosters collaboration between governments, civil society, and the private sector.

Central to our vision of socioeconomic inclusion is the principle of leaving no one behind. Recommendations are made to prioritize the inclusive recovery of vulnerable groups, including women, youth, refugees, people living in temporary settlements, and internally displaced persons. Concrete steps should be taken to ensure that the most marginalized members of society are not only included in the recovery process but are able to thrive in the post-crisis landscape. By placing equity at the forefront of our recovery efforts, we can build a more just and inclusive world for generations to come.



# 1) LOCAL ECONOMY REVITALIZATION

During the assessment, numerous elements shed light on the importance of economic diversification and industrialization in reducing dependence on low-value agricultural products and activities. Supporting the development of industries and sectors with potential for enhanced productivity and value addition is crucial. This entails fostering virtuous exchange between urban and rural areas, where urban centers provide markets and opportunities for rural agricultural products, while rural areas contribute to sustainable production, especially in agro-industrial value chains. Initiatives promoting local and regional food systems, supporting small-scale farmers and agro-enterprises, and improving infrastructure can facilitate this exchange, fostering economic development, food security, and reducing urban-rural inequalities.

Investing in education and skills development is vital for empowering individuals to become self-reliant contributors to their economies. Aligning training opportunities and educational curricula with the specific needs of post-disaster areas and the economic recovery strategy is necessary to

equip individuals with relevant skills and enhance their employability.

Additionally, promoting local consumption can stimulate economic activity and support local businesses. Awareness-raising initiatives highlighting the benefits of purchasing locally produced goods and services can encourage community members to support their local economies. Furthermore, fostering partnerships between businesses, civil society organizations, and government agencies can amplify these efforts, creating a conducive environment for sustainable economic development. By harnessing the potential of local resources and fostering collaboration among stakeholders, communities can revitalize their economies and build a prosperous future for all.

Adana, February 2023.

© Ana Mora Segura for Action Against Hunger.

## DESTEKAR: A MODEL FOR SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Destekar, a brand created by Support to Life (STL), offers a platform for individuals and corporations to contribute to social good through their purchases. All revenue supports STL's humanitarian aid for disaster victims. Products, designed by talented individuals and affected communities, convey the stories of those impacted by disasters.

Destekar aligns with STL's mission, maintaining high standards from design to sales. For instance, the "Hope" collection, crafted by women affected by disasters, generates income for STL's efforts. Such socially-conscious brands promote a just and equal world, benefiting both buyers and producers by creating a sustainable and impactful business model.







## 2) CAPACITY BUILDING

The region affected by the earthquake faces a pressing need to bolster its workforce across various sectors crucial for reconstruction and economic revitalization. Industries such as furniture upholstery, and construction stand out as areas with significant labor demand. Other sectors like shoemaking, food production, gastronomy also hold the potential to address the current labour demand effectively. Capacity building initiatives, particularly those focused on practical skill acquisition, are also needed in handicrafts like knitting, sewing, and embroidery.

In rural areas, entrepreneurship can play an important role. An effective strategy for rural entrepreneurship entails investing in productive capacities tailored to local contexts. Short-term training programs, delivered through mobile educational centers, can play a crucial role in bridging the skills gap in rural areas. These programs should be tailored to the specific needs of the local population and focus on practical skills relevant to the agricultural sector, such as sustainable farming practices, crop management, and food processing. By equipping individuals with the necessary skills and knowledge, these initiatives can empower rural entrepreneurs to start and sustain their own agricultural businesses, thereby creating employment opportunities within their communities.

However, capacity building efforts should extend beyond mere skill acquisition. Stakeholders emphasize the importance of holistic programs encompassing digital literacy, entrepreneurship, and market adaptation. Digital skills are increasingly essential in navigating the evolving landscape of e-commerce and online marketing. Similarly, courses in entrepreneurship and business management are crucial for fostering innovation and self-reliance among aspiring entrepreneurs.

In addition to technical skills, addressing soft skills, including social skills, is crucial, particularly within refugee communities. Capacity building programs should incorporate activities focused on communication, teamwork, conflict resolution, and cultural sensitivity to enhance social cohesion and integration.

By integrating host communities and displaced populations, including refugees and internally displaced persons, into joint training

sessions, these programs can promote mutual understanding, empathy, and collaboration. This not only promotes social cohesion but also creates opportunities for meaningful interaction and shared learning experiences, bridging divides and building solidarity among diverse populations. Furthermore, by empowering both host and refugee communities with the skills and knowledge necessary for effective social interaction and cooperation, capacity building initiatives contribute to creating inclusive and harmonious environments conducive to sustainable livelihoods and community resilience.

### PROMOTING ECONOMIC RECOVERY THROUGH EMPOWERMENT AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Action Against Hunger's expertise in economic recovery is exemplified by the Shuttle methodology, designed to tackle unemployment through personal empowerment. This innovative and flexible approach fosters empowerment by promoting a team-building dynamic where participants take the lead. The training and support provided are non-directive, flexible, and adaptable to individual needs.

The Shuttle Program unites groups of motivated individuals, guided by a mentor, to develop personal and professional skills aimed at either seeking employment or developing a business. Over a period of a few weeks or months, participants engage in group and individual sessions, focusing on both soft and hard skills, networking activities, and other initiatives that improve their knowledge of the local job and business market. The program's unique approach helps participants recognize and enhance their inherent skills and competencies, fostering long-term cooperation and integration into the local economy.



### 3) UNDERSTANDING TARGET GROUPS CIRCUMSTANCES

In the efforts to promote socio-economic inclusion, it's crucial to recognize and acknowledge the unique circumstances of the people being supported. Understanding their individual challenges is key to crafting interventions that meet their needs, especially in the aftermath of natural disasters like earthquakes. Collaborating with local actors is essential to ensure that interventions are contextually relevant and responsive to the community's needs.

Our needs analysis revealed some crucial insights into the personal struggles faced by those affected by the earthquake, especially those still living in temporary settlements. We've seen how the trauma of the earthquakes has deeply impacted people's ability to rebuild their lives. It's important to integrate into any livelihoods programming activities that acknowledge the psychological distress affecting earthquake survivors and offer integral support in this regard, in collaborations with specialized actors at the local level.

Psychological wellbeing is deeply intertwined with the current living conditions, particularly in the camps, where women report feeling fatigues and suffering lack of privacy. Offering opportunities such as trainings that allow, particularly women, to take a break from such living conditions can have a positive impact on the wellbeing of the people living in the camps and consequently increase their chances to restore or strengthen their livelihoods. Through such activities, social networks can be enhanced, fostering connections, support systems, and opportunities for networking.

Another element that influences the livelihoods of the target groups is the concerns of losing social assistance benefits by participating in employment projects or finding formal employment. Despite the mixed evidence, the fear of losing financial support might outweigh the potential benefits of engaging in employment initiatives for some people. It is therefore advisable to provide clear and transparent information about the pros and cons of participating in employment initiatives, including the potential continuity of social assistance benefits during participation in employment projects. Additionally, a phased approach to transitioning from social assistance to employment income should be explored, allowing individuals to gradually increase their earnings while maintaining access to essential support services.

Cultural dynamics should also be considered, including traditional gender roles and patriarchal structures, which present barriers, particularly for women seeking employment opportunities. The possibility of organizing awareness campaigns targeting both men and women should be explored, along with initiatives to redistribute unpaid care and domestic work, and interventions aimed at increasing the representation of women in decision-making positions.

Adiyaman.

© Support To Life/ Kerem Uzel.



#### PROMOTING COHESION THROUGH CAPACITY BUILDING

Action Against Hunger's initiative in Abkhazia exemplifies how capacity building can foster community cohesion. The project targeted young individuals from diverse ethnic backgrounds, including Kists, Georgians, and Chechen refugees, providing them with essential skills for the labor market.

By implementing a localized version of the Shuttle methodology, participants worked together to enhance employability through a diverse set of activities. This collaborative effort not only improved job prospects but also built trust and mutual understanding between historically segregated communities. The program's success was evident as it empowered participants to challenge prejudices and pursue common goals, promoting lasting social cohesion.

## 4 LOCALIZATION AND PARTNERSHIP

To maximize the effectiveness of recovery efforts and promote inclusivity in the economic recovery, it is essential to strengthen partnerships and engage the private sector and public agencies in the livelihoods programming. Private sector entities can significantly amplify the impact by providing essential resources, expertise, and market access. Public actors can ensure that the projects developed are aligned with the economic recovery strategies. These partnerships can facilitate sustainable employment opportunities, crucial for long-term recovery and resilience.

Private sector involvement is particularly relevant in vocational training projects, as companies benefit from a skilled labor force while individuals gain skills that are relevant to market needs. Chambers of tradesmen and craftsmen are also important partners in training and supporting local businesses. These collaborations can bolster local economies by ensuring businesses have the skilled workers they need. Conducting thorough local market assessments in collaborations with local actors

can ensure that vocational training programs are relevant and meet the needs of the local economy.

Collaborations with the employment agency İşkur can play a critical role in social cohesion activities. İşkur's extensive engagement with NGOs in regions like Mersin demonstrates the potential for successful partnerships aimed at addressing employment challenges. By working together, NGOs and İŞKUR can bridge gaps between job seekers and employment opportunities, fostering a more inclusive and resilient community.

Localization is key to ensuring that recovery efforts are sustainable and effective. This involves empowering local actors to take an active role in recovery projects. By leveraging local knowledge and networks, interventions can be better tailored to the specific cultural and socioeconomic contexts of the affected areas. This approach not only enhances the relevance and impact of recovery efforts but also builds local capacity and resilience.

Supporting local businesses and entrepreneurship is crucial for economic recovery. Initiatives should include providing financial assistance, technical support, and training to local entrepreneurs. Encouraging local procurement and creating opportunities for local businesses to participate in reconstruction projects can also stimulate the local economy. Additionally, fostering a supportive environment for startups and small businesses can drive innovation and job creation.

### SUPPORT TO LIFE'S LOCALIZATION STRATEGY

Support to Life's localization strategy empowers local actors in humanitarian interventions by enhancing their capacities, fostering cooperation, and ensuring accountability. Through awareness events, capacity-building activities, and financial and technical support through partnerships with donors and international organizations, Support to Life aims to create a more effective humanitarian aid system.

This approach addresses immediate needs and builds a resilient, inclusive ecosystem where local stakeholders collaborate for sustainable, community-driven solutions.

In line with its partnership policy, STL emphasizes mutual trust, respect, genuineness, and commitment to enhance the effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of humanitarian efforts.

#### Adıyaman.

© Support To Life/ Çiğdem Güne.





supporttolife

[www.accioncontraelhambre.org/es](http://www.accioncontraelhambre.org/es)  
[www.supporttolife.org](http://www.supporttolife.org)